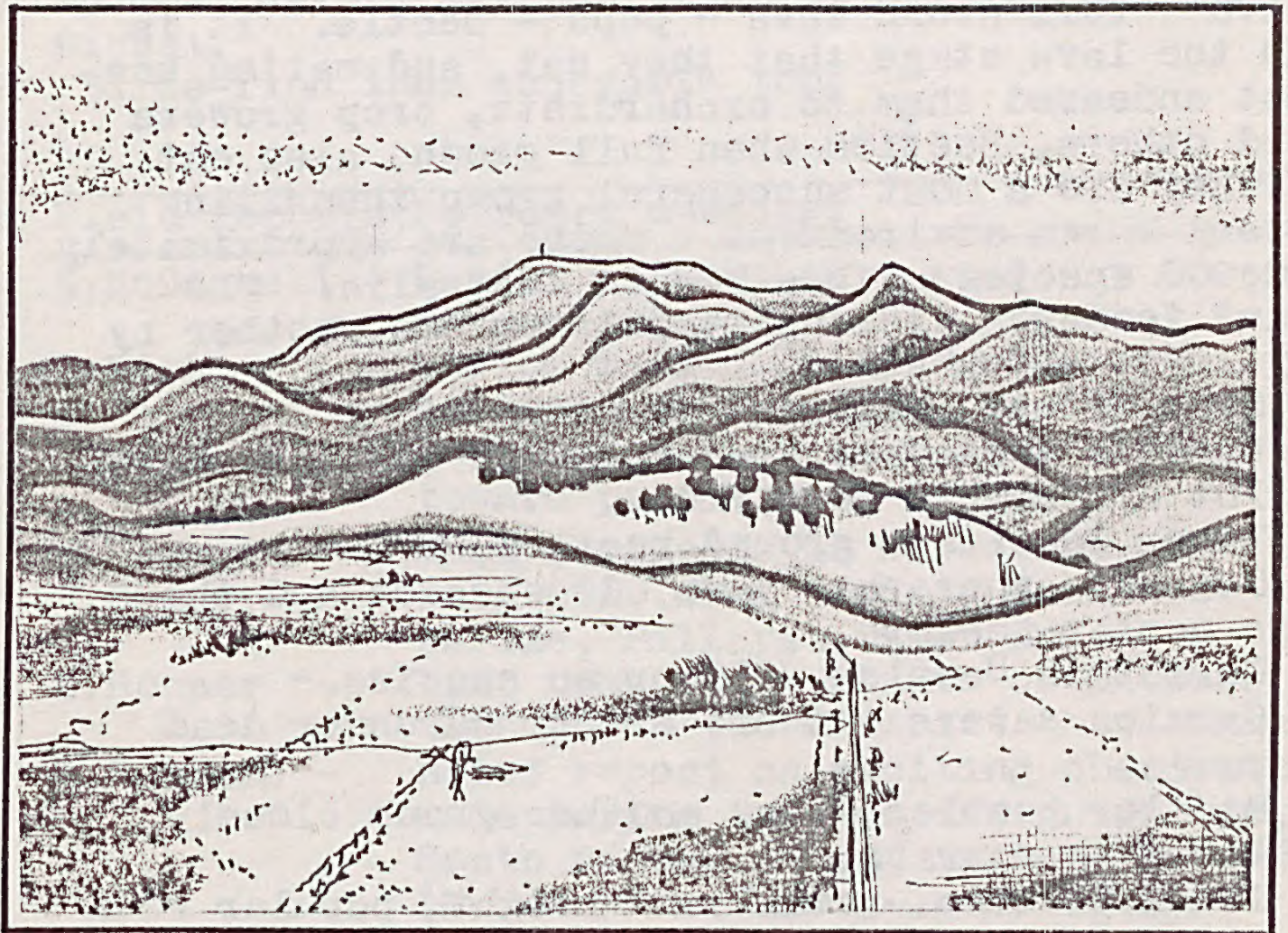


Field Naturalists Club of Ballarat

MARCH 1988

EXCURSION - NEWS SHEET

- Meeting : March 4 Annual General Meeting
 Pictures from Mt. Cole- B.Millar
- Meeting : April 8 Members Night
- Excursion : March 6 Mount Cole area ..Full day
 March 18-20 WVFNCA - Warrnambool
- Excursion : April 10 Ballarat Reptile Park, and local
 bush .. Half day



President : Miss H BURGESS 312210
Secretary : Mr B DOWLING 432425
Treasurer : Mr W WHITESIDE 413544
Editors : Mr G BINNS 332282
 Mr L FINK 052 861319

Meetings as specified are held at the School of Mines and Industries, Lydlard Street Sth., Art Building, commencing at 7.30 p.m.
EXCURSIONS, AS SPECIFIED, COMMENCE FROM CROCKERS, cnr. STURT AND ARMSTRONG STS., BALLARAT, at 9.30 a.m. for FULL DAY OUTINGS OR AT 1.30 p.m. for HALF DAY*

COLEOPTERA. A Talk by Peter Kelly

Insects form a vital part of the environment. There are 1,000,000 or more insect varieties in the world and possibly 100,000 in Australia. They are divided into groups or orders and this is determined by the wing structure.

The order COLEOPTERA, Beetles to us, have specialised forewings thickened, acting as wing covers that protect the membranous hind wings that fold up beneath them. The word Coleoptera means sheath-wings.

Beetles have a hard outer casing in lieu of a skeleton. As they grow they shed the outer case.

This is called metamorphosis (beetles have a true metamorphosis), starting from an egg - young lava - full grown lava - pupa - beetle. It is in the lava stage that they eat, and eating has not endeared them to orchardists, crop growers and others, Beetles when full grown also eat.

They are a most successful group inhabiting every known environment. There are approximately 40,000 species of beetles in Australia. The families are distinguished from one another by their antennae.

Some of the families are -

Carob - these are predators and the lava cause a lot of trouble to farmers.

Tiger Beetles - ground beetles

Scarab - there are 5 or 6,000 species and they are nectar feeders.

Christmas Beetles - 50 or so species.

Carrion eaters - these are found under dead mammals.

Fiddler Beetles - are another group closely related to scarabs.

Jewel Beetles - small and bright, popular with collectors.

There are beetles that bore into trees, or rather their larvae do. These have long antennae and are called Longicorn Beetles. They have a long life cycle and may remain in timber for

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many years after it is cut.

There are beetles that bore into wattle trees.

One apes wasps by hovering over flowers with small stubby hovering wings.

Weevils have their mouths thrust out on a rostrum with characteristic antennae that fold away. They are very hard. Weevils cause a lot of damage. One was collected by Dr Solander at Botany Bay (ie The Botany Bay Diamond Beetle).

Another large family is the Leaf-eaters containing 5,000 species distributed throughout Australia.

While some cause damage and sometimes get to plague proportions, others do nothing but good for us Humans; one of these is the Ladybird.

In fact without the beetles and other insects we most likely may not be able to live on this Planet.

Birds find them enjoyable too!

L.F.

Field Reports, February Meeting.

- K.McDonnell - Family of Pied Currawongs at Invermay. King Parrots at Angahook Park.
- L.Fink - Yellow Tailed Black Cockatoos, observed at Meredith, Elaine and Bunninyong. In each case flying toward pine trees.
- K.Hammond - Musk Lorikeets in Wendouree.
- J.Spicer - Barn Owl, dead bird in Wendouree Parade, Ballarat. East End.
- H.Hooper - Vast numbers of plants of Catsear throughout the district this summer
- H.Burgess - Brief report on exciting observations made during trip to the Antarctic, South of Cape Horn, in December. (More of this at a later date).
- G.Binns - Fewer numbers of Plovers (Dotterals) on the ocean coastlines around Cape Otway this Summer.
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Natural History Crossword No. 4 will appear in the April Newsletter, by courtesy of "Tantalus".

Spargo Creek Excursion, Saturday 6th February.

Heavy rainstorms on the previous night certainly freshened the forest for our excursion but also created most unsuitable conditions for beetle seekers! Peter Kelly assured us that beetles are washed away or take cover and don't emerge until warmer conditions prevail, after rain. Nevertheless, as our field work progressed we were able to capture members of some sixteen families of beetles. The days outing took members via Wilsons and Moorabool Reservoirs, Wambat forest to Carrolls Track at Spargo Creek.

In the morning interesting sightings included a flock Longbilled Corellas, a pair of fine Swamp Harriers and a pair of Hares intent on mating preliminaries at Wilson Reservoir. On the forest road a large Swamp Wallaby had been killed during the night.

Peter's expert leadership in the beetle study resulted in the following families being identified and displayed, then released.

Weevils - various species including the Botany Bay Diamond Weevil (an appropriate bicentennial note!);

Pintail Beetle; (species) Darkling Beetle; Flat Beetle; Longicorn; Jewel Beetles; Ladybird; Click Beetle; Soldier Beetle; Leaf Beetle; Carabs; Scarabidae; Chrysomelidae; Belidae; Rhipiceridae; Ditrapidus.

No doubt many members were impressed by this introduction to a very intriguing branch of entomology. Perhaps it may prove a catalyst to tempt the formation of a specialist group within our Club!

We are grateful to Peter for his enthusiastic instruction and generosity in terms of time and knowledge

G.W.B.

COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday March 23 , at 8 pm . 1320 Dana St., Ballarat.